

We are in the Hartford, Connecticut area today, if I'm correct. I think that's where we're at (we never know anymore), with Laura, Myrtle, Audra and myself. It's good to see some familiar faces again and some that we haven't seen before; some we see on a fairly regular basis, you know, semi-annually anyway.

So, in last week's sermon (which you'll hear later), we talked about "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." And God, through His book, tells us that there is a way that seems right, a way that seems right to man, but the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes," and the way that we see things gets in our way. And we begin to understand once we come into God's Church about "the lust of the flesh," and this is where this action actually takes place once the eyes see. And this is how the "lust of the eyes" is fulfilled, through the "lust of the flesh," and usually, that's when the sin takes place. Once the eyes see it and the flesh takes action, and then the sin is accomplished.

And we discussed how this begins in the mind, in the mind of man. And we discussed how "the pride of life" has to do with both of these. And Mr. Matthews has just completed a series on pride, "the pride of life," and it encompasses some of this, which explains a lot to you and me as the Church of God about this "pride of life" and how it affects us in God's Church. But it's important to you and me to understand that the battle begins in our mind. That's where it begins, and it's an ongoing battle and it's never ending, and it'll never end until we are out of this flesh.

We understand that "the lust of the flesh" is fulfilled through this mind because that's where it begins. If we don't stay on guard, and if we don't stay alert, we can be a part of sin very quickly, and we can be blindsided a lot of the times, even with God's spirit. And when we do these things we are actually going against what God says and we're actually lifting our self above what God says in His book. It's always about what God says is right and what God says is wrong, and it's when we don't look to God for what God tells us. "The pride of life" really sums it all up, when we understand, of raising one's self up above God. That's what it actually is when we decide for our self what is right and what is wrong, and not look to God for what God says in His book. "The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life" sums it up, what leads to sin, and it leads to those things that resist God and His Son Jesus Christ. And it leads to those things that fight against God and God's way of life, and there are things that you and I must fight against and overcome in this life, in this flesh. When looking at the lust of man, the lusts that are there, it's not a hard job for Satan and the demons to use these things against you and me, these lusts that are in man, and the demon world uses it mightily, when we understand. They broadcast these attitudes to our mind about anger, about bitterness, about jealousies, about being offended, just to name a few. And as we know, you and I in the Church of God have no right to be offended by anything that anyone says, when you understand, because of these things.

But this is what Satan does, and he stirs it up, and he stirs it up in our mind. Satan and the demons have attacked God's people down through time from the beginning of time. And we went back and looked, even in the Garden Eden where it began with Adam and Eve (and you'll hear this in another sermon), but we did go back and look at Adam and Eve and what took place. But God's people are not deceived. We know that this world is deceived. So the battle for you and me in the Church of God are more spiritual in nature; that's why they come after you and me. And God's book is filled with examples from beginning to end about these battles, and this world, Satan's world (better said) is already deceived. We

know by the scriptures that the whole world is deceived except for those that God is working with. So Satan focuses upon you and me, about what God is doing, about what God is building, about what God is working with, the Church of God. And Satan has always tried to destroy what God is building, and where we find our self at in this space of time, we are no exception to this being, and there is a battle that enters into a spiritual realm that I know our mind does not comprehend. I know we don't comprehend it, how fierce that battle is, that war, that spiritual war that we are in.

Turn over to Proverbs 5. We went through Proverbs 5 and we'll recount part of it in this sermon so that we can move forward. Proverbs 5:1... And hopefully we can come to see some of our weaknesses that we have in this human flesh, and hopefully we can understand that we have to fight constantly in the Church of God and come to understand that we are in a spiritual war. We are in the fight of our life for our spiritual life, when we break it all down.

**Proverbs 5:1**, God says – **My son, attend to My wisdom**. So we can see that this is actually God speaking to mankind, and God says to pay attention to *His* wisdom and bow our ears to His understanding. So what is being said, once we are called, once we are in God's Church, and once we have God's spirit, we are to listen to what God gives from that point on. He says we are to bow *our* ears to understanding. So we, in the Church of God, we have to look to God for understanding because we know that's where understanding comes from, and it comes from no other place. **That you may regard discretion, and that your lips may keep knowledge**. We know that knowledge comes from God and we know that this is the only place for true knowledge, and that it is the only way to understand the right and correct way to live and the only way to know how to respond and have right relationships. This is where knowledge comes from, from God. And that makes our lives better, when we are in obedience, because then we can be blessed when we come into obedience. We are blessed mostly with understanding in the mind – that's where it comes from – but this is how it takes place.

We know that God's purpose at this time is not to save this world. This is Satan's world, but there is coming a time in just a little while when Jesus Christ will come back to this earth and it will no longer be Satan's world anymore. And that's what we look forward to. But like I say, this is still Satan's world at this time. Satan is the god of this world, and that is why God said, don't let this world be a part of us. We know that there is a thousand years coming when there will be one government upon this earth, one Church, and a time when everyone will have access to God's spirit, a wonderful time. But we're not there yet. Satan's way of doing things will be done away with and a different way of life will be taught for a thousand plus one hundred years at the end.

Let's notice verse 3; God teaches us about conduct. And we have talked about this in the past. We talked about it in the last sermon. God uses a harlot as an example, and it's a good example when we break it down and understand what is being said. God uses a harlot, a prostitute, and it's in Satan's world where He's talking about, but it has deeper ramifications for you and me. Satan uses the pulls of this world, his world, and he uses the enticements to seduce God's people, even with God's spirit. And we've seen this in the past by people that walked side-by-side on every Sabbath with us. So, we've seen Satan at work. We've seen him use enticements to pull God's people away from what is true and what is right. And Satan uses much of this world's music, its movies, sex, and morals. He uses his morals mightily. It's an easy thing to get to man, those morals, and mostly morals have a lot to do with sex. Satan uses all kind of enticing things which lead to sin. I used the example last week about all the advertisements that we see, which use women in bikinis to even sell automobiles. We see this, all the enticements that are there through the advertisements that are out here. And Satan is always trying to seduce man to choose for himself what is right and what is wrong, to take it upon himself. And that's what Adam and Eve did,

when we understand. In that garden they took it upon themselves to *decide* for themselves what was right and what was wrong. We know which way they chose. They chose to go with the god of this earth, Satan. And the god of this earth makes sin look good! The example about this prostitute, this harlot that God had written in His book, is so that we can understand how Satan works because he uses these same tactics upon you and me. And God had it written in His book so that we could understand it's that that seduces man in his mind, and that's the example that's used in Proverbs 5. It's that which would cause a man to turn his eyes...and that's where it starts, "the lust of the eyes." It starts in the mind. That's where it takes place, and when we look at it spiritually, it's the same. When we look at what takes place in the mind, "the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life," Satan makes those things look good. And God had this example put in this book for a reason, so that we could focus and know how he works. God tells you and me that we have to bring *every* thought into subjection, and when we look at these examples, this is exactly what it's talking about – we stop it in the mind. When the thought hits the mind, that's where we stop it. And we have to be different from this world and not partake in the things that are enticing, that cause you and me to sin.

Sex has been the downfall of many down through time, and Satan has used that mightily! He even used it on King David, if we remember, David and Bathsheba. It's written in God's book for all to read. Hopefully, you know, mine's not being written – we never know. We're not through it all yet! But the point being, if we partake of these things we need to look at the end results, and that's what God wants us to see through this example in Proverbs 5, the end result and what would happen if we partook of these things physically or spiritual. It has a *devastating* effect on family, friends, anybody that's in contact with it, the Church of God. And there are always things in this life that will try to pull us off the path that God has set before you and me, and a lot of it has to do with morals. That's where Satan attacks us, and it's much to do with going against the way God says that we should live – that's what it affects. God says that there will always be these pulls as long as we're in this flesh, pulling at us in this human flesh to keep us off the path that He has set before you and me, to keep us riding in the ditches – and I used this example in the last sermon. I think I'll use it again today.

I've been in God's Church a long, long time, and I've likened it to where the road is smooth, the highway is smooth, or the pavement is. God's people are usually down in the ditches or up on the side of the road, and the only time that it's smooth is when they cross over to get to the other ditch. So that's the example. And Satan wants to wreck us, if possible. Most of the time we are riding where it's bumpy...most all of us do. Like I said last week, my heads hit the top of the car many-a-time, and I'm sure yours has too...to keep us from the correct way to live. And a lot of it is through morals, the morality of mankind. There are hardly any morals out there anymore, brethren, and I think you understand that. It's hard to even watch a TV program now on regular TV, and some of it's pretty graphic. I said, you know, if you're watching it with your children you don't know whose eyes to cover, yours or theirs. So it's pretty graphic.

Let's look at **verse 7** and see what God tells us **...do not depart from the words of His mouth, and remove your way far from her. And come not near the door of her house.** So this example that it's talking about, what it's talking about, is God warning His people, warning you and me, when we understand what is being said. And He's telling us not to fall into these traps that Satan has set for you and me by enticement, by using the pulls of the flesh to draw us in, to get us to indulge us in things that will cause you and me to sin. That's what he's after and he's a master at it. And if we do, that will bring us into captivity and bring us into sin, and Satan wants to move you and me far away from anything that is true and right. We understand that this world is in bondage; they think they're free. When we were in this world we thought we were free. We thought we had freedom. It's only when we come into God's

Church that we understand what true freedom is. And we understand that all of mankind does not know they're in bondage at this time, but we understand this. God has opened your mind so that you can see His plan, the whole plan for mankind.

But this world has taken Satan's message and swallowed it hook, line, and sinker. And we understand that because of this that the whole head is sick. It's a sick world! And the whole world needs to be healed, especially the mind of man. That's where the healing needs to take place. You and I understand that we are in captivity and we understand about Egypt and how it refers to you and me, and that we are to come out of sin. And we understand also about Assyria and what that means to the Church of God. We've had many sermons on that.

In verse 9, let's look... If we partake of these and come into the captivity of Satan, **verse 9** gives us a warning. And it says, **Lest you give your honour to others, and your years to the cruel one. Lest foreigners be filled with your wealth and your labours go to the house of a foreigner.**

But let's focus on **verse 11 – And you mourn at last**, here are the results, unrepented sin. So we can see what God is talking about and He's bringing it down to the end... **when your flesh and your body are consumed**. Now, we know when that is. Mankind doesn't have a clue, but God has opened your mind to let you know when this time is, and we know that it's at the end.

**Verse 12 – And say** – let's notice – **how I have hated instruction**, so this is what took place, **and my heart** (better said, “the mind”) **despise correction**. That's what happens when you come back into Satan's captivity. So this is written to you and me, the Church of God, so that we can understand Satan's tactics. **And have not obeyed the voice of my teacher**, so they became disobedient and they raised them self above God and they decided for themselves what is right and what is wrong for their life – actually what takes place. **And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to them that instructed me!** And we've seen it over and over. We all sit side by side in God's house by many that are taking it upon them self to decide what is right and what is wrong for their life and they go back into the captivity of this world.

So we can see what happens in the mind. That is what God is telling us. We can see when this takes place that we are entrapped by Satan and we're brought deep into sin when it takes place, usually. Usually it's through the morals, through sin. We know when this flesh will be consumed though. So there is pain coming if we go down these paths. God tells us the ultimate result: the flesh would be consumed, the lake of fire, and we know when that is, if sin is unrepented of. God has a plan for that as well. And if sin goes unrepented of we are entrapped again in Satan's world and it's not a pretty picture when that takes place. There are many that have fell into that prey, and once the mind turns, I don't know if you can find your way back, where we are in time. But what God is saying, that they began to not obey the voice of their teachers and they didn't listen to those that instructed them in God's way. So we can see the battle that takes place in the mind.

We know that there is a time coming that Jesus Christ *will* come and establish the government upon this earth and mankind will begin to be taught about the correct way to live. Man will be taught about “the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.” Man will be shown the true way to live, and that's what we're talking about today, *A Way of Life*, and that will be your title today.

Satan has so deceived this world, and he makes it look pretty, brethren. And like I said last week, he's put a good paint job on it and it's enticing and it looks good until we get deep in sin. And as we just read

in Proverbs, we would find our self entrapped again, and most likely you would never find yourself out of that trap in this life. And there we would stay until repentance takes place because that's what it takes to get out of that trap— repentance.

Let's be turning to Romans 7:14. We're talking today about God's way of life, God's way to live, and God has given us warnings through Proverbs 5 and He tells us that it starts in the mind. It's something that begins in the mind and it begins to build in the mind, in the thoughts of man, and that will lead to the action that would be decided upon, from that point.

We understand that God's law is spiritual in nature and it has to do with a way of life, God's way of life. And God tells us in **Romans 7:14**, we find – **While we know that the law is spiritual...** So Paul is telling us here, let's notice what he's saying and what he recognized. Paul said, **I am carnal**. So that's something that you and I understand, and as we addressed part of this in the last sermon, we'll move forward from here. This was written twenty-five years after Paul was an apostle in God's Church, twenty-five years. And Paul was explaining something so that you and I could understand, those whom the end of the age has come, God's Church. Paul said **the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin**. So what Paul is talking about is being captured and being enslaved to sin. That's what his message is.

And we understand we're not free yet. We're not completely free, and that is why we have to keep repenting because we *are* in Satan's world still, and you and I continue to sin, even with God's spirit. We have to go before God on a continual basis to forgive us of our sins. But there is a lot being said by Paul, and Paul is going to explain to us about a way of life that we should live.

You and I face these battles constantly because of the lust that God had instilled in man. God created man. He knows about these lusts, but Paul is telling us that we are sold under sin. So what is he saying? We understand, when it looks farther at this, that it means to be “enslaved to sin.” So when Paul is explaining this he is talking about how you and me are to constantly yield our self to a process that God has in place. And we start to understand that we, by ourselves, we cannot yield to this process without help; we have to have help, and we're not free from the entrapment of Satan's world. Even though we are in God's Church and have God's spirit, we still have to deal with this world and its entrapments, so to speak, but we are blessed because of what God has given us and the penalty for sin that was made for you and me. But we understand that we are still in the process of coming out of Egypt, so to speak, coming out of sin, and we are learning about a way of life to live. God is delivering us; we understand this, and He's teaching us, but it is a *long* process. And as Ron has said many times, it takes a lifetime to learn, to learn what God is teaching us.

Once we are baptized, we come to understand this, that it is a way of life to *never* turn back from. We should *never* turn back from coming out of Egypt. God's Kingdom will be upon this earth and we will be changed one day. And as long as Satan's world, as long as Satan's age is here, man will be enslaved to it, when we understand, especially if we yield to his ways of life. “The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,” we come to understand that this is part of our nature. God created us this way with these instilled in us and we can't help it. But God had written in His book a way to overcome these things and the correct way to live. And we have to be careful when we deal with one another because of these lusts, and it affects our relationships mightily sometimes. The lust for another man's wife, to give an example. Lust for a lot of wrong things in this life. It doesn't necessarily have to be about sex. It can be about anything. Jealousy, strife, so many things that affect us in our relationships, and it's due to these lusts.

And we all commit sin. God tells us in His book that we know that the law is spiritual and Paul said the he was carnal. He recognized this and that he was sold under sin.

So we'll break down what Paul was saying, and he said, **for that which I do, I do not allow**. Paul is showing the dilemma that he finds himself in and he says, **for that I would**, in other words, what he is saying he wants to do, that he does not do. We have to choose and we have to make the right choice with God's spirit. We have to try to choose this way of life, the correct way to live. We all want to live this way of life all the time, but we know how it is in this flesh. We have these weaknesses that entrap us sometimes and all of a sudden we are in sin again, and it happens over and over...sometimes for the same sin over and over. And not one of us want to do this, but we are carnal, as Paul said, sold under sin. But we want to be right toward God and we want to be right toward everyone in God's Church, so therefore, the battle. And we face these battles constantly and it's just a way of life in this human flesh. So Paul is explaining to you and me that he wanted this way of life, and he turns around and looks at what he's doing and he's not always doing what he really wants to do. So that's what Paul is saying here.

**Romans 7:14** – He says, **that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing I do not understand, for what I will to do, that I do not practise. For what I hate, that I do; if then I do what I will not to do I agree with the law that it is good, but now it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh, [better said]), nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do I do not do, but the evil I will not to do, that I practise. For if I do what I will not to do it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells in me.**

**Verse 21** – Let's notice what he said, **I then find a law...that evil is present with me**, the one who wills to do good. **For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man: But I see another law in my members** – let's notice – **warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity**, just what we were talking about, **to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then** – let's notice – **with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.** If Paul had not written these things it would be hard to understand this human nature, but God had it written in His book for you and me so that we can begin to understand how these things could be.

Paul said, **For what I would**, in other words, what he wanted to do that he didn't always do, but sometimes he does what he hates. We find our self in those same situations. So better said, it's the very thing that we hate, the very thing that gets us into trouble sometimes, this human nature, the pulls of this flesh, “the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life,” and it really reflects in relationships, when you look around.

Satan has really done a number on this world! I don't even know what the divorce rate in America is, but it's rampant. So it's not a hard job for Satan to use these things against us.

Back up in **verse 16** let's go back and notice – **That if I do that which I would not want to do, I consent unto the law that it is good.** So he understands about God's law, about God's way of life. Paul understands that it's good to follow that path, and that's the one that we *should* follow. And that's the way that we should choose. And Paul is saying, and he is recognizing, that he does not want to be any other way and he wants to repent when he sins and he wants to choose God's way of life. It's the way he wants to live. It's what he's saying.

When we were baptized there was a way of life that we had to choose, and once we're baptized we begin to really understand what it's about. We are in a spiritual war and we are in the fight of our life, for our life, when we understand. And we have to fight this human nature, the pulls of this flesh. So that is what Paul is telling us about, a correct way to live, and it's about a way of life that God tells you and me. It's about the way we think because it's in the mind that we have to change. That's where it first has to take place. We have to think differently once we're baptized. It's not normally how we thought in this flesh before our minds were being opened to this way of life. Most of us were fighting right along in Satan's world.

We have to learn the way that God wants us to think now, and that's what God tells us through His book, and He's teaching us through Paul. God says to be in oneness with Him and His Son, Jesus Christ, to strive to be with the same mind with Him and His Son. So the battle for this mind begins to take place, and we understand then that we have to fight for this way of life. And we have to really understand that we *are* in a spiritual war for our life.

**Verse 17**, Paul said – **Now it is no more I that do it but sin that dwells in me.** And it's because of these lusts, “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,” this human nature. It's just a part of us.

**Verse 19 – For the good that I will to do, I do not do, but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.** Because of this human nature, because of “the lust of the flesh,” because of “the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” And let's notice what Paul calls it, **but the evil which I would not;** in other words, that's not what he wanted to do and he didn't want it to be a part of his life, but he says that's what he does. He found this in his life. So there are things that we get caught up in this life while we are in Satan's world and Paul is explaining this to us.

**Verse 20 – Now, if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells in me.** Paul recognized that he was in a battle in this flesh, as long as he was in this flesh, and he understood about sin and he understood about the lust of man. We know that this is just the way it is with man. We understand why we needed a Passover. We understand we had to have that Passover to help us. We understand, because of these lusts that we are talking about, there had to be a Passover so that God could forgive you and me of our sins and so that God could continue to live within each and every one of us, so that we could experience these “lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” and how to deal with them. We have to continually overcome in this flesh. Something has to take place in this mind. If we are doing the things and following God's way of life and not succumbing to the sins in Satan's world we are always growing and overcoming in this fight, when we live God's way.

**Verse 21 – I find then a law, that...evil is present with me,** the one who wills to do good, so we can see it's about the mind and Paul understood it. And he said he found then a law that “when I would do good evil is present with me.” So even when we have the best intentions in this flesh we can find our self back in sin quickly, and it blindsides us sometimes. And that's why when these thoughts hit our mind. We have to bring them into subjection quickly and not move it to the next level. Paul says, **then I find a law, that when I do good, evil is present with me,** so it's *always* there and it's *always* a fight and it's *always* a spiritual battle when we understand. We *always* have to be on guard... the pulls of the human mind that are there because of this being and because of human nature that is inside of all of us.

Paul said in **verse 22 – For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.** Paul is actually talking about the mind and that which God has given to you and me in the mind. That's what he's saying.

So that we can come to understand about a way of life, a way that God instructs you and me to live, God's way of life. And we love the way that God reveals this to us in the Church of God as we come to understand more and more about the way to live, as we move forward through God's plan.

And so, in God's way of truth, way of life in the truth, we have to live life in this flesh by what God says through God's instructions in His book, and we have to learn the correct way to live.

**Verse 23**, Paul said, **I saw another law in my members warring against the law in my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve... but with the flesh the law of sin.** We have to learn to exercise these things that we are learning in God's Church from Sabbath to Sabbath. Paul said he found this law, that when he did good, evil is always present with him, but he said, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." But he also saw that other law that was in his mind, and therefore, the battle.

Paul is talking about a law in his mind that is about God's way of life... and it's in our mind. God began to give that to you when he started awakening you, and at baptism you received His spirit. And that's where that law is instilled in you, in your mind. Paul said he saw a law in his members warring against that law that was in his mind. We can see that there is a battle that ensues, and it's a spiritual war that takes place. We need to recognize that we're in this battle for our life! And as we look around we can see some have lost that battle, some that I thought would be there until the end, but they succumbed to these lusts that we're talking about and they no longer have God's spirit. And that's just the way it is. It's a hard thing to see sometime's, when people turn, when that mind turns, and they go back into this world, Satan's world.

This world does not agree with God's way of life, brethren. We can see through the Proverbs and this example that God is giving you and me about a harlot, a prostitute, and how it works on a spiritual level. That's the way that Satan does it. And as I said earlier, Satan does not have a great battle on his hands to entice mankind. We can see that in the world of advertisement, the music, the movies; it's just rampant! And I don't know how the teenagers can deal with this in their minds. I feel for those. We see those teenagers in the Church of God now that have these battles, but a lot of this is just normal. What you and me are appalled at, it is normal in their lives now. It's a hard thing to comprehend, but it's there. I know it's in my grandchildren. I see it every day in their lives, you know, but it's a normal thing to them.

**Verse 23 – I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members** ...the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Paul understood this and he understood the power of sin and why man has to constantly repent. It's what Paul is explaining about that law, the law of sin that was in his members, and this is the way Paul was explaining it so that you and I can understand this human nature and the correct way to live. Until we are no longer in Satan's world, this human nature will plague you and me, brethren, this law of sin that is in our members.

**Verse 24**, Paul says, **O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?** So what Paul really understood, he understood that unrepented sin would lead to death, just like we read about in Proverbs, the lake of fire. That's where it would lead eventually and that's what it would be apart from God, if we leave God. It would lead to death. Paul is saying, **O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?** We know how this takes place. We know that we have a Passover, Jesus Christ, and we know what He did. He paid this penalty for sin for you and me. And so we

understand that God is bringing us out of this captivity and that we are coming out of it. We're coming out of Egypt. We're putting sin out of our life as we do. It's through the Passover that we are being delivered, and eventually the whole world, those that repent, when we understand, and start to live this way of life.

But when we look around on the horizon and we look at this world, Satan's world, this world is in total captivity and they don't have a clue. When we look around at just China and what they are doing today, it's "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes." And when they look at America they want what's here. That's what it boils down to. They want what somebody else has. When we look at Russia, it's the same. So it's these lusts that are bringing this world to a *crescendo* that our minds cannot comprehend. And if Jesus Christ didn't intervene, there would be *nothing* left, brethren; there would be *nothing* left alive upon this earth because of these lusts.

Paul said that he thanked God through Jesus Christ, his Lord. **Who will deliver me from this body of death?** So we understand that it is Jesus Christ, brethren. That's how it's done. It's the only way it can be done. That's the reason Paul said, **With the mind I myself serve the law of God** – but let's notice – **with the flesh the law of sin**. So there is a war inside that Paul recognized and he said, **with this flesh the law of sin**, because it's in his members. That's where it's at. And he says he's going to do things and he's going to say things, and he's just like you and me. We've all done it. We've said things and the minute it leaves our mouth we wish we could have taken it back. So that's what he's telling us; it's just in us. We cannot always see the full picture sometimes, and therefore we sin, even though unwillingly, but we do it.

Let's go over to **Romans 12:1**. God tells us through His word and He says, **I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God** – let's notice – **that you present your bodies a living sacrifice**. In other words, put to death the body, and that's what you pictured at baptism. When you went under that water, that's what it pictured, you were putting to death that body. That was the agreement that we all made with Jesus Christ, and that's what we agreed to put to death. And when we come up out of that water it paints you and me a picture. Just as Jesus Christ was raised up, it paints you and me a picture. Another way of saying it is "to walk in newness of life." That's the way God says it in His book. That means to think differently, to become a new man or a new woman. So, it's about the mind.

When we begin to do this, to begin to come out of Egypt, so to speak, to come out of sin, then we should present our bodies a living sacrifice and we should want to live a different way of life, to think differently from that point on, from baptism. We want to put to death the old self. We don't want to go back in Satan's world; we want to walk in God's world from this time forward. And let's notice the rest that is said, **that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God**, a way of life, brethren, a way of life that God is instructing you to live. And he says, **that's our reasonable service**, in other words, that's what's expected. It's talking about a way of life and it's the way that you and I should live from that time forward, a way of life that is acceptable to the Great God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

And let's notice **verse 2** – **And do not be conformed to this world**, Satan's world, and not to take part in it, **but be transformed** – let's notice what's being said – **by the renewing of your mind**. In other words, think differently through the spirit that God gave you at baptism (better said), **that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God**. We prove it, brethren, by living it. That's how we prove it, by living the way that God says to live. So there are choices that you and I make and we have to choose this way of life. God does not force this way of life upon anybody, even after you're called; it's choices. But when we choose this way of life something begins to happen, the mind begins to be

transformed, and therefore, character is being formed and a correct way of life is being formed in your mind because of where you're headed as the Church of God. I *hope* you understand what you've been offered! This world is coming to an end, brethren, quickly now, and your job is just ahead of you. That's what you're being taught. You're being taught about a way of life and it's being instilled in your mind, because when the sky lights up, people will want to know the correct way to live. They'll want to know what's going on, what caused all this destruction. And therefore, you will be on the.... you have a front row seat now! You'll also have a front row seat then to teach millions, billions, about a way of life that you are learning about now, and I hope you understand that.

**Romans 7:25 – I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.** So if we do as Proverbs 5 was telling us, God's example that He gave us in His book, if we yield to Satan's way, sin is going to be there, and *a lot* of pain is going to be there if you've been a part of God's Church. Pain is coming your way. But if we yield to God, we are able to fight the fight, and the more that we grow in oneness with God the more that we are able to be at one with God, especially in the mind, the more you will be blessed.

**Romans 8:1** we find – **There is now no condemnation to those who were in Jesus Christ**, but if we fail to repent of sin there *is* condemnation and we're cut off from the flow of God's spirit. But if we are repenting when we sin and if we're growing, we're able to remain in Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ in us, in other words, if we don't cut our self off, if we repent quickly. Because I hope you understand when you sin you are cut off...you're cut off. That's the reason you need to do it quickly. **And so there is no condemnation to those who are in Jesus Christ** – let's notice – **who walk not after the flesh**, “the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life,” **but after the spirit**, in other words, if we are choosing this way of life. And that is our choice, but we have to choose. God doesn't force us. If we are choosing, we are starting to understand we are in a spiritual war and a spiritual battle, and that it is our desire to fight this battle and it's by choice. We will still slip and sin as Paul is telling us. That's what he's telling us. But our desire is *not* to sin. None of us want to sin. We want to choose what is right! And that's why you're here on this Sabbath day, and that's why you're here honoring God's Sabbath because you want this way of life and you choose this way of life. You choose to learn more about God and about His ways and about the way of life God says to live. That's why you're here, so that we can fight the fight that we're in, fight this spiritual war, and fight the battles that we face week to week, day by day, so that we can become more at one with God and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And when sin pops up and we're fighting the fight, we choose, we choose to repent, repent of that sin and not live the way of this world, Satan's world, but to live this way of life. And we understand that Jesus Christ paid that penalty for us so that we *can* choose and make the changes that we need to make and move forward in God's plan. We need to do whatever it takes, brethren, to live this way of life, whatever it is, doesn't matter. We cannot walk in both worlds; it just won't work. It's just as we saw in Proverbs 5. We have to choose.

**Romans 8:12 – Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live according to the flesh, but if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**

**Romans 8:2 – For the law of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ has made me free from the law of sin and death, for what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh...** in other words, here is God's law, but man is weak. The flesh is weak, as we know. We know the whole story of Israel. It's written in this book for you and me. And we know what they did with God's law that was given to them. God led them in that desert for forty years to teach them about the Sabbath day. And when we come down to our time, what has man done with just that one thing? So, without God's spirit this cannot be

accomplished, and that's what Paul is telling us. They were given the 10 Commandments, and we know the story. We know about the Day of Pentecost when that law was given, the 10 Commandments, but there was a more important time coming in AD 31 when God's Church was founded upon the apostles and prophets to give us what we needed to live this way of life. And we understand that we have to have this spirit to live this way of life in spirit and in truth. But even when we do this, we find our self in a battle for our life, our spiritual life, and it's a constant ongoing battle. But we begin to understand and we understand that we have to have help, God's help, to help fight this war, this spiritual war, and it is through God's spirit that we have to have this help. And that's why you don't need to *ever* cut yourself off from this spirit. You can become a casualty so fast! That's what God is telling us in Proverbs. The lusts that are there, it can so reach out and grab you in Satan's world, and it's a powerful thing. It's a powerful tool that Satan uses. So we understand that we have to have God's spirit to live God's way of life.

**Verse 3 – For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh,** exactly what it's telling us, **God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh –** and let's notice what's being said – **on account of sin.** To make a way for you and me, that's why He did it. God understands about this flesh. He created it, brethren. He's no stranger to it. He **condemned sin in the flesh,** Jesus Christ did. We know that Jesus Christ lived a perfect life and that Jesus Christ was able to become our Passover so that you and I could have the forgiveness of our sins.

**Verse 4 – That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.** And when we understand, this is also talking about faith, and it's faith in Jesus Christ. And it is by faith, and it's through faith that you and I can continue. It's through and by God's spirit that helps you and me to continue. It's by faith in believing that Jesus Christ is our Passover and that He came and died for you and me so that we could live this way of life, and for all the world, eventually, when we understand the plan of God, for those that choose this way of life once it's offered to them. But for now, there are minds that are being molded and fashioned in those that have God's spirit, and that's you, the Church of God. It's a wonderful thing to understand, and it's so that you can teach about a way of life in the near future, the correct way to live.

When we look on the horizon mankind has made a horrible mess, brethren. I don't care what nation you're in. It's a horrible mess out there! People's lives are mostly horrible, when you understand, but they don't understand that. They think they're free, but they're really in captivity at this time.

Let's notice, **that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.** So we can see that we have to choose this way of life. We have to *want* this way of life. We have to *fight* for this way of life. We have to fight for the way of life that God is offering you now, and in just a little while, it'll be for massive amounts of people, brethren, and you have a front row seat to see all of it unfold before your eyes.

**Verse 5 – For those who live according to the flesh set their mind on the things of the flesh,** and they do. But when you and I do this in the Church of God, there is sin, usually....when we do it. And as we read about in Proverbs, there is pain that is going to follow once we go back into Satan's world, those that were called to this way of life. It's not a pretty picture, brethren. Satan will make mincemeat out of them before it's over.

**For those who live according to the spirit, the things of the spirit.** So we can see that it is a choice of choosing things of the flesh or things of the spirit. That's our choices. It is a way of life that we have to desire. We have to have a desire to know what is right and what is wrong, and we have to know what

God says about what is right and what is wrong. It's not about what we think. It's about what God says. God says there is a way that seems right to man that results in death, and we can see it on the horizon. Man would annihilate everything upon the face of this earth because of that thing, choosing for himself what is right and what is wrong. And I can tell you that they think they're right! All those missiles out there that are pointed at us – they think they're right, every one of them! They don't think they're wrong! They don't look at the destruction they'll cause. "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," they're proud they have those weapons and they can't wait to use them. And they will, they'll use them.

**Verse 6** – God tells us right here – **For to be carnally minded is death**, and that's exactly what'll take place. They will kill every living thing upon this earth if Jesus Christ didn't intervene.

We saw in Proverbs 5 that unrepented sin would lead to death, so we understand that when this happens, when we cut our self off from God's spirit, we understand that God cannot bless us anymore when this takes place. That blessing is taken away! That spirit is taken away! And God cannot work with anyone that does that anymore.

We can see that the righteousness of the law comes through faith. We know that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and when we look at human nature, and when we look at what God is calling the carnal mind, it's talking about the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, when we break it down. And these things are an enemy to God's way of life. That's what they are, these lusts.

**Verse 6** – the rest, God tells us **...but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. And because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.** God tells us that the carnal mind is enmity (hostile) against Him. So we can see the battle that takes place in the mind as Paul is telling us about it, the lust of man. And Paul is describing it, about a way of life, and the battles that we have in this mind.

**Verse 8** – **So then those who are in the flesh cannot please God**, in other words, those that are not striving to live God's way.

**Verse 9** – **But you are not in the flesh but in the spirit, IF** – there is that *'IF'* – **IF indeed the spirit of God dwells in you.** So this is why we have to repent quickly, because we do not want to be cut off from God's spirit. And that's exactly what happens when we sin. We are cut off from that flow of God's spirit.

Let's notice what the next verse is saying: **Now, if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he is not His.** *Exactly* what we just said.

**Verse 10** – **If Christ is in you, the body** – let's notice what's being said – **the body is dead because of sin**, and let's notice the rest, **but the spirit is life because of righteousness**, because of what God accounts to you and me as righteousness. He will live in us because sin has been paid for by Jesus Christ. We need to cry out to God when we sin, as Paul is explaining to us. And he's explaining to us about the battles that we face in this flesh. And we're not always able to live this life perfectly, and we do sin, but we are striving to live God's way and we're growing when we do because we are constantly repenting when we sin.

**Verse 11** – **But if the spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you He who raised Christ from the dead will also give to your mortal bodies, through His spirit which dwells in you.**

**Verse 12 – Therefore, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh to live according to the flesh.** We're not to live that way of life. We are debtors not to the flesh. So let's notice what's being said, to live out the flesh, because this is Satan's world and that's what he uses.

**Verse 13 – For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if through the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.** Just like you said at Passover when you made that agreement with God and His Son. We seek to put to death the human nature and the carnal things that are inside of you and me, and that is our battle, and that is the battle for our minds that ensues...and it's ongoing, as I said.

**Verse 15 – For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you received the spirit of adoption (better said, "sonship") by whom we cry out, Abba, Father.** So brethren, God made us this way for a purpose, and if we choose this way of life and choose what God shows you and me, and if we want God in our lives, God will forgive you and me every time. That's what's being said. Unless we sin the unpardonable sin, God has made a way for you and me to make it to the end, if we choose life.

God understands about the lust of this flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and as long as we're in this body, we're going to have sin until we are freed of it. That's the battle that we're in and that's the battle that we have to fight, a constant battle.

**Verse 14,** God tells us, **For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.** This takes place in the mind, not in the flesh. And what that means? We have to yield and obey what God says in His book about a way of life. God will continuously forgive us, and it's like I said, most of us are riding in the ditches and on the shoulder of the roads most of the time, so there is a lot of forgiveness that has to take place. But the best place is the way of life that God says, up where the road is smooth. But with us, with our nature, we've got to ride where it's bumpy all the time. But we want to follow God and it's in our minds that we want to do these things. That's where it comes from. We want to be led by God. We want to be led by Jesus Christ, and we want to be led by God's spirit. That's our desire, to follow God.

Ephesians 2:1. When we grasp through God's word about our nature, about what God says, we recognize that Satan's job has not been difficult. We understand that Satan has been put here for a purpose, when we understand, to use these weaknesses that we have. And believe me, he's a master at it! He can tie you in a knot very quickly and he can stir things up. But I like the way that Mr. Matthews always says, "God shows our self to our self." And Ron says it's like lifting up the lid of a cesspool. And at baptism that's what we start to understand We understand what's inside man. And that's what Paul is explaining to you and me, about what is inside each and every one of us and how we can overcome. But we have to recognize what we are and we have to see our self the way God sees us and see what we have to do and the repenting and the way of life we have to live.

**Ephesians 2:1 – And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sin...** that's what God says, we were dead in them **...in which you once walked according to the course of this world,** Satan's world, brethren, **according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.** And people just react to whatever is around them in Satan's world. Most just live and die in Satan's captivity never understanding anything about this life and what it represents, never understanding anything about why man was put upon this earth. They just live and die without this knowledge, and most never even seek it anyway. And they do not understand *anything* about God's

plan, but they are walking according to the course of this world, just like you and I did. They just react in Satan's world; it's what happens.

**Verse 2 – In which you once walked according to the course of this world – and we did – according to the prince of the power of the air, talking about Satan, the spirit – let's notice – who now works in the sons of disobedience.** So God is telling us it is a spirit and it's out there working...and it is. It's a *demonic* spirit out there. And if you want to know how graphic it is, God says he's like a roaring lion. And if you've ever seen a lion attack its prey, you know exactly what God is saying, and they will tear you to pieces, brethren.

**Verse 3 – Among whom also we once conducted ourselves in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.** So this is the way that we were living and we had no concept of anything else.

**But God (verse 4), Who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Jesus Christ - let's notice - that in the ages to come He might share the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness toward us in Jesus Christ. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourself: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest anyone should boast, for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Also, we had our conduct in times past in the lust of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh.** Just living life however we wanted to. And we were just like the rest of this world, deciding for ourselves what was good and what was evil. Just like Adam and Eve, we were making those same choices, and we did it in Satan's world where things looked good. It had a good paint job on it.

Let's turn over to Galatians 5:16. God tell us of a way of life and He instructs us in the way that we should live. And Paul has explained to us how it's in the mind, and then God says in **Galatians 5:16 – Walk in the spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.** So that's how we do it, brethren. Stay focused on God and live this way of life, **for the flesh, just what Paul was saying earlier, for the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.** So here is about this war that is taking place again, and it's being explained. **These are contrary to one another; so that you do not do the things that you wish.**

**Verse 18 – But if you are led by the spirit you are not under the law.** And this is talking about the penalty of the law.

**Verse 19 – Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresy's, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelry's and the like... it's a lot of them, brethren ...of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in times past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.** It will not take place! So the two don't mix.

**But the fruit of the spirit – let's notice – is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.** Sounds like a good way to live to me. **And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires,** just like what I said about baptism, we come up in newness of life, and we should have crucified those desires and want to live this way of life. That's what it's saying, better said. **And if we live in the spirit let us walk also in the**

**spirit... in other words, that should be your focus, to do what God says to do, to live God's way of life ...and let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.**

So God tells you and me to walk in the spirit and we will not fill these lusts of the flesh. This is the way to stay on the smooth part of the road – that's what God is telling us – up on the pavement where it's smooth. And if we're able to do that all the time, that's what we would want to do. But no, we have to ride on the shoulder of the road or down in the ditches sometimes. The good news is there was a way made for you to get back on the smooth part of the road, even if it's just for a short while when you're crossing over to the other ditch.

But that's what we strive to do. We try, we strive, to ride on that smooth part, but this is why we have to repent, because we're riding in those ditches, and that's not our desire. We *like* the smooth part of the road. It's just hard for us to stay on that part of the road because of these things Paul is telling us, the way God made us, the things that we have to overcome, “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” And that's part of our battle, when we understand.

Verse 16, let's back up. If we're walking in the spirit and we're fighting this fight, so to speak, if we are running the race, we will not fulfil the lust of the flesh. It's about choices, but this does not mean we won't slip and sin because that's our nature and we *will* slip. But we saw in Proverbs the example that God gave us. We have to consider before we act. God used a prostitute as an example, “the lust of the eyes,” and it has to be stopped when it enters the mind. It's where it needs to be stopped. God tells us to bring every thought into subjection, and that's what He's talking about, so that we can stay on that smooth part of the road. And we understand that that lust begins in the mind and the eyes see something. God used that harlot and He used man because man is usually drawn to women through the eyes. That's where it takes place, when he sees a beautiful woman. And we can reverse this and women can understand this as well. It's not a hard thing to reverse it. That's what Paul has been talking about, where the choices have to come, and it's from the pulls of this nature that we have, this human nature, for these lusts that are in man. God talks about this because it is so attuned to Satan and his deceptions in this world and the way that he uses these lusts to get to you and me. And when I say “man,” it's talking about men and women. It's talking about both. But Satan has used sex powerfully down through time, as we know in God's book, and when we look at this world it's used in everything. And as I said last week, they are even using it to sell healthcare now. Ironic! That's ironic in itself, you know, to use sex to sell healthcare.

But this world is going to be cleaned up in just a little while, and you have a front row seat to that. That's an awesome thing to understand! It's going to go through a healing process and mankind will have to learn the things that you know in this mind, the correct way to live, the way that God says to live. And that's where it's being formulated, in your mind. But it will take obedience to God to do these things, and that's why you're on the front row, because you *will* have this obedience and you will be used to teach mankind a *wonderful* way to live that we just read about, the blessings, the peace that just that in itself will bring about starting in the Millennium.

The Kingdom of God is just on the horizon, brethren. When we look out on the horizon at the world scene with just China and their nuclear weapons, they've got those subs on the other side of Hawaii, the nuclear weapons. Who do you think that they got it pointed at? I think our government was making a little fun because the subs are so old, but those missiles are not old. It doesn't matter what you fire them from. I covered some of that in the last sermon, and you'll hear some of that, some of the news articles I read and the destruction that could take place just from them alone, not counting the rest of

the world. That's just from them. But God is the only one that can show you and me the correct way to live, the way of life that He says to live.

Let's turn over to John 8. God created this flesh and God is the one that shows you and me the way of life that He says to live, the way that will bring about happiness, peace of mind, and enjoyment in human life as we live the way that God says to live. Man's way, man's mind, has to be healed. The healing of the mind has to take place, the way that man thinks. Man's mind will have to be changed.

John 8:31. You know what, you can just note that. I'll read this. Move on to Romans 6:12. It's just one verse here. I'll just quote this to you: **John 8:31**, God tells us – **Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on Him, If you continue in My word...** “Continue in,” we know what this means, “abide in.” We hear it every Passover: “continue, abide, dwell in, remain in,” and the “remain in” is the most important when you understand, once we have God's spirit. You definitely want to remain once God calls you. You *do not* want to lose God's spirit at this time, and that's what's being said **...then you are My disciples indeed**, in other words, if we don't cut our self off from this spirit. The only way you can be a disciple is to have this spirit dwelling in you. And then the rest of this says, **And you shall know the truth**. And that's why you're here because you know the truth, you know God's plan for mankind, *all* of man.

**Romans 6:12**, God tells us about a way of life to live. **Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you may obey its lust**. It's just what we're talking about. **And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourself to God as being alive from the dead**. You need to recognize it. We *were* dead in our sins until God opened this mind and you were baptized and received God's spirit and had the forgiveness of sins. And God tells us to present ourselves before Him as *being* alive from the dead, and I hope you understand what's being said **...and your members as instruments of righteousness to God**, the correct way to live, the way that God says to live.

So we can see that this is what we should do and we can see that there is always a choice for man as long as we're in this flesh, to choose what is right and what is wrong in this flesh, because of the lusts that are in you and me. We always have this ability to turn.

**Verse 14 – For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law**. We are always to obey the law, when we understand, but this is talking about the penalty, the penalty of that law, **but we are under grace**.

**Verse 15 – What then?** The question that was asked. **Shall we sin because we are not under the law**, the penalty, **but under grace? Certainly not!** And as we have seen, what Paul is talking about is the pulls that are there, the pulls that are in the mind and the battles that you and I have to fight on a constant...constantly, brethren. And here it is explaining the choices that have to be made.

**Verse 16 – Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether sin leading to death or of obedience leading to righteousness. But God be thanked that though you were slaves to sin, yet you obey from the heart** (better said, “the mind”) and the right choices were made. So we can see, it's summed up right here, **that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin you became slaves of righteousness**, because of the choices that were made, brethren, in the mind. **I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh: for just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness and of lawlessness, leading to more lawlessness; so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness**. God is telling you and me the right way to live. Choose life. That's what

He's saying. **For when you were slaves of sin you were free in regard to righteousness, what fruit did you have in the things of which you are now ashamed. For the end of those things is death.** Unrepented sin is death. **But now having been set free from sin and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end everlasting life,** eternal life.

**Verse 23 – For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.**

And now I'm going to read just a few paragraphs from this last post, "Ordinations & The Church – Part 3," because it fits in with this sermon and it's well said. And a lot of this was to the ministry, but it's for you as well. Ron says...

In this series, we have focused upon how it is **God** who has given **His** Church a ministry. As it has already been stated, the primary purpose of that ministry is to bring people in the Church to a mature state (spiritually) so they can in time be changed into Elohim. It has also been stated that this structure exists to lead, teach, guide, and serve to help fashion God's people, and that this is accomplished through imperfect human beings.

Just what the sermon was about today, Paul telling us about the way to live and about "the lust of this flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Ron says...

The most important job (responsibility) given to any minister is that they "faithfully speak" God's truth (word) to others. This can be in counsel, preaching, or simply general conversation with others.

And this applies to you as well.

The words of those who are ordained are often given higher regard by others and often tend to "carry more weight" in the eyes of others. Therefore, a higher standard and responsibility is upon every minister, because if their words are not in unity with God, it can lead to confusion, division, bad attitudes, and rebellion in others. Such influence should never be taken lightly, but in the history of the Church that influence **has** been taken lightly, not even grasped, and has far too often been used to wrongly sway others to their "own" thinking...

To choose what is right and wrong for themselves, is what's being said.

...thinking that is not in harmony with the Church and God.

To turn someone else's mind.

So there are many ways a minister is to faithfully speak God's word toward others and this is not simply limited to the few who are most visibly seen and recognized by the sermons that are given Sabbath to Sabbath. Again, this "faithful speaking" can be done through various ways spiritually, including what is written, even lived through example to others, and in any number of scenarios that involve conversation with others.

The way we speak to one another. Relationships.

Yet God desires that all who are called into the Church and those called into the ministry will serve Him faithfully. However, it is also by design and purpose that all have free will and free choice.

Just what we were talking about today, the right to choose.

God does not “make” (force) members of the Body of Christ to be faithful, but He will “make” (create and transform) them to become faithful if that is their desire to yield to such a process working in their life. The same is true concerning the ministry. God does not force them to be faithful.

And we've seen that in our recent past.

So when all is said and done, every individual is personally responsible to judge what they hear and what they see (examples) from all others [especially in the ministry] as to what is in unity with God and what is not in unity and harmony with God. No one can blame another, not even a minister who has gone astray and has begun to speak divisive things, if they follow wrong words or the wrong actions of others.

### **Free Choice**

So as in all of God's creation, “free will” by its very nature also provides a way of learning and teaching that can be accomplished through no other means. The angelic realm experienced the result of this as nearly a third of those spirit-composed beings chose to quit yielding themselves to the “way” of their Creator.

The way that God said for them to live.

Two thirds of the angelic realm were made stronger and more fully convicted of God's ways through this experience.

By our very nature as human beings, whether a member of the Body of Christ or one who has also been given a responsibility added to their life by being ordained, some will choose a “way” that is not of God and will then become a vessel to dishonor.

God designed this process of “free will” to work in both the angelic realm and the Church in order to try, test, cleanse, and refine His creation so that it can come into great unity and oneness with Him. This has even more to do with what Paul was saying concerning the structure of the ministry in the Church, as this aspect of free choice and free will exists in the process that Paul was describing about the structure of the ministry and its purpose in Ephesians.

Paul went on to say that this structure was for “the edifying of the Body of Christ” (Eph. 4:12). Others can take these things that Paul is describing as though the ministry is close to being perfected or highly perfected, since its purpose is for the “perfecting” (maturing) of the saints, along with the work of God's service (ministry) to His Church, and the edifying of the Body of Christ. Certainly, the goal of “all” who are in God's Church

should be to seek to faithfully serve God's Church (one another) in such a way. The reality is that all in the Body have human nature and some turn away from God by free choice – even in the ministry. But such examples of becoming vessels to dishonor also serve to perfect (mature) and ultimately edify God's Church – for those who become more fully sobered to reality and the capabilities of their own human nature...

Just what we talked about today, what we are capable of.

...as well as becoming more fully humbled, guarded, and strengthened in wisdom.

By listening to God and the way God says to live.

This word “edify” in English means “to instruct, to improve morally, and to profit spiritually.” Vessels to honor and vessels to dishonor can produce this edification if one is yielding themselves to God's spirit to work in their life. The real life experience of this process of edification working in one's life is two-fold. It will produce a positive, inspiring, and enjoyable result that can be received from those who are faithfully serving God, but it can also produce a positive result spiritually from growth in wisdom, spiritual strength, and conviction that can be received through learning from a bad example of a vessel to dishonor that has been unfaithful to God.

It is also interesting to note that the use of this word in Greek that is translated into English as “edifying.” It is composed of two words that mean “to build” and “a dwelling,” which is by implication us as a family, a household, or a temple. This same word is translated as “building” in Ephesians 2: “In whom all the ‘building’ is fitly framed together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for an habitation of God through the spirit” (Eph. 2:21-22).

The purpose for the structure of a physical human ministry is for the maturing of the members of the Church as a means of God “building” (edifying) the Body of Christ. This process is to work in us “until we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a matured person in the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (into Elohim)” (Eph. 4:13). As we learned all too well after the Apostasy and ever since, this does not occur easily in our life, but it involves numerous battles, testing, fire, heartache, and struggles in life. Conquering human nature in order to bring it into complete subjection to God, [that's what we're after], as well as fighting against and resisting an evil spirit realm, is not easy. It requires a constant vigilance, never giving in or giving up, and a determined conviction to run the race to the finish. All this requires a growing unity and reliance (in faith) upon God to constantly strengthen and deliver us.

So brethren, there is this battle that is always there as long as we're in this flesh. And Ron sums it up very beautifully right here. We have this ability to be enticed, to be seduced, and we have this ability to go astray and sin, as we just heard. We have the ability to not obey God, even with God's spirit. And there is a strong spirit out here, but even without Satan around, without this being around, we still have this nature that is hostile to God, this human nature. And that'll be around throughout the Millennium, this human nature, even once Satan is chained. God's book tells us about this.

And we've looked at “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” and how it affects those of us in God's Church. And we looked at the way of life and how God says we should live, and Paul sums it up so well in what we went through today, the battles that we have. And so, brethren, strive to keep sin out of your life as we move forward through God's plan.

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